

The teams who are represented here represent hard work and dedication and vision and goals, the things that really make a healthy society more healthy. Not only are the folks up here with me great athletes and disciplined individuals; they're people in a position of responsibility now that they've become champs. You have a chance now to influence people's lives like you never had before.

I guarantee you there's a bunch of junior high kids in the State of Ohio wondering what it's like to be a champion. They know their football team won the championship, and now they're wondering what it's like. How does a champion behave? What does a champion do? Not only can a champion run fast and tackle hard, but hopefully the champs up here send the signal that making right choices in life for youngsters is an important part of living a responsible existence.

I know there's a lot of young ladies who are growing up wondering whether or not they can be champs. And they see the championship teams from USC and University of Portland here, girls who worked hard to get to where they are, and they're wondering about the example they're setting. What is life choices about?

I guess my point to you is that you're a champ on the field, and now you have a great opportunity to be a champion off the field by setting good examples, by showing people that there is such thing as a compassionate society, that—encourage people in the university you go to to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved

yourself, that recognizing in the midst of plenty here in America, there are some who suffer and some who hurt. And you have an example now as champs to help solve America's issues one person at a time. And so I'm here to recognize you as great athletes but, better yet, as great people who are a part of the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

Congratulations on your championship. More importantly, congratulations on using the capacity you now have to help this Nation fulfill its great potential. May God bless your universities. May God bless you all and the families. And may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Bob Taft, Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell, and State Attorney General Jim Petro of Ohio; Representatives Michael G. Oxley, Deborah Pryce, and Patrick J. Tiberi of Ohio; Archie Griffin, associate athletic director, Ohio State University; Lisa Love and Carol Dougherty, senior associate athletic directors, University of Southern California; and Kirk Herbstreit, reporter, ESPN television network. The President honored the Ohio State University men's football team, the University of Southern California women's volleyball team, the University of California-Los Angeles men's soccer team, and the University of Portland women's soccer team. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the National Economic Council and an Exchange With Reporters

February 25, 2003

The President. Thank you all for coming. I'm meeting with my National Economic Council, key members of my administration

who have been traveling the country, listening to the voices of small-business people, entrepreneurs, workers, listening to their

concerns about our future. And at the same time explaining to them how we address the economic issues of our country.

This administration is firmly committed to the principle that if people have more of their own money, they're likely to spend it on a good or a service, which means somebody is more likely to be able to find work. We're committed to the notion that investment of capital equals jobs.

And so therefore, our policies are aimed at encouraging investment and job creation, as well as consumer confidence and spending. And we are confident that when the Congress listens to the people, that they will support this plan. It's an important economic plan, and it's one that we look forward to vigorously working with Congress to get it done here.

I'll be glad to take some questions. Let me start off with Angle [Jim Angle, FOX News].

Iraqi Disarmament/Risks of War

Q. Mr. President, what would it take at this point to avoid a war with Iraq?

The President. Full disarmament.

Q. Could you expand on that, sir? I mean, what—

The President. Well, there's only one thing. There's full disarmament. The man has been told to disarm. For the sake of peace, he must completely disarm. I suspect we'll see him playing games, that he will—the world will say disarm, and he will all of a sudden find a weapon that he claimed he didn't have.

Q. Happened this morning, as a matter of fact.

The President. I suspect that he will try to fool the world one more time. After all, he has had a history of doing that for 12 years. He's been successful at gaming the system, and our attitude is, it's now time for him to fully disarm. And we expect the Security Council to honor its word by insisting that Saddam disarm. Now is the time.

David [David Jackson, Dallas Morning News].

Q. Mr. President, one of the uncertainties about the economy is the possibility of a war. Do you have any idea how much a war might cost and how it might affect our economy here at home?

The President. David, there is all kinds of estimates about the cost of war. But the risk of doing nothing, the risk of the security of this country being jeopardized at the hands of a madman with weapons of mass destruction, far exceeds the risks of any action we may be forced to take.

There are people who worry about the future. I understand that, and I worry about the future. I worry about a future in which Saddam Hussein gets to blackmail and/or attack. I worry about a future in which terrorist organizations are fueled and funded by a Saddam Hussein. And that's why we're bringing this issue to a head.

Heidi [Heidi Pryzbyla, Bloomberg News].

Q. Will the outcome of any U.N. Security Council vote have any effect on whether or not we go to war in Iraq?

The President. Obviously, we'd like to have a positive vote. That's why we've submitted a Security Council resolution, along with Great Britain and Spain. But as I said all along, it would be helpful and useful, but I don't believe we need a second resolution. Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed. He may play like he's going to disarm, but he hasn't disarmed. And for the sake of peace and the security of the American people, he must disarm.

Fournier [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

Q. Sir, how big and exactly what kind of sacrifices will be asked of the U.S. troops, their families, the American public, should you decide to go to war?

The President. Well, any time you put a troop into harm's way, that in itself is a sacrifice. First of all—and that's why war is my last choice. That's why I've said all along I would hope that the world would

come together to convince Saddam to make the decision to disarm.

Perhaps the biggest risk in the theater, if we were to commit our troops, is Saddam himself. He shows no regard for human life in his own country. After all, he's gassed them; he's used the weapons of mass destruction on his own people that he now claims he doesn't have. He tortures people. He brutalizes them. He could care less about human condition inside of Iraq.

And so I think one of the biggest dangers we face, if we go to war, is how he treats

innocent life. And it is important for Iraqi leadership and Iraqi generals to clearly understand that if they take innocent life, if they destroy infrastructure, they will be held to account as war criminals.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Second Additional Protocol to the Mexico-United States Taxation Convention

February 25, 2003

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Second Additional Protocol that Modifies the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Mexican States for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Mexico City on November 26, 2002. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State concerning the proposed Protocol.

The Convention, as amended by the proposed Protocol, would be similar to tax

treaties between the United States and other developed nations. It would provide maximum rates of tax to be applied to various types of income and protection from double taxation of income. The Protocol was concluded in recognition of the importance of the United States economic relations with Mexico.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Protocol, and that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
February 25, 2003.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

February 25, 2003

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers

Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month